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COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Sub-Commission on Prevention of
Discrimination and Protection
of Minorities
Forty-ninth session
Agenda item 1 (c)

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

METHODS OF WORK OF THE SUB-COMMISSION

Mr. Alfonso Martínez, Ms. Attah, Mr. Bossuyt, Mr. Diaz Uribe, Mr. El-Hajjé, Mr. Fix Zamudio, Mr. Guissé, Ms. Gwanmesia, Mr. Khalil, Mr. Maxim and Mr. Mehedi: draft resolution

1997/... Organization of the sessions of the Sub-Commission

The Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities,

Bearing in mind that in its resolution 1997/22 of 11 April 1997 the Commission on Human Rights requested the Sub-Commission to continue thoroughly reviewing its working methods with a view to improving further its efficiency,

Recalling that in the same resolution the Commission called upon the Sub-Commission to focus on its primary role as an advisory body of the Commission, to facilitate efficient and effective participation of non-governmental organizations, to devote sufficient time at its forty-ninth session to the discussion of its working methods and to prepare specific recommendations on that issue for consideration by the Commission,

Mindful of the in-depth debate held at its forty-eighth session on the issue of possible alternatives to how its annual session is organized,

Considering that the present form of its sessions - four weeks of meetings of five working days per week, with at least two daily plenary or in-session committee meetings and a total of not less than 40 meetings per session - is not conducive to improving its effectiveness as an advisory body, since it does not permit an in-depth review and analysis of all the documentation and initiatives submitted for its consideration as a collective body, nor facilitate thorough consultations among its expert members and more constructive exchanges of views and opinions between them and participating governmental and non-governmental observer delegations,

Recalling its decision 1996/112 of 29 August 1996, in which it requested the Secretary-General to examine the financial and other implications of alternatives to the present organization of its sessions,

Having considered the note submitted by the Secretary-General on this subject (E/CN.4/Sub.2/1997/2),

Considering that, prima facie, a five-week session of five working days per week with one week of two daily meetings and four weeks of only one meeting per day offers a better possibility to enhance its capability to play the role of an advisory body to the Commission,

Taking into account that according to the Secretary-General's estimates obtained from the Conference Services Division of the Secretariat and the Administrative and System Support Section of the High Commissioner/Centre for Human Rights (E/CN.4/Sub.2/1997/2, annexes I and II), in the worst possible situation the cost of the five-week-session option mentioned in the preceding paragraph will not exceed 38 thousand dollars, or 1.86 per cent, more than the cost of the present four-week arrangement for its annual sessions,

1. Requests the Commission on Human Rights and the Economic and Social Council to authorize it, on a trial basis, to organize its fiftieth, fifty-first and fifty-second sessions in the form of five-week sessions of five working days per week, with one week of two daily meetings and four weeks of only one meeting per day, with a total of 30 meetings per session;

2. Decides to re-examine this issue at its fifty-second session under the relevant agenda item, in the light of the experience gained during its fiftieth and fifty-first sessions;

3. Recommends the following resolution to the Commission on Human Rights for adoption:

"The Commission on Human Rights,

Taking into account Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities resolution 1997/... of ... August 1997,

Bearing in mind the financial and other implications of alternatives to the present organization of the Sub-Commission's sessions (E/CN.4/Sub.2/1997/2, annexes I and II),

1. Endorses the Sub-Commission's request to be authorized to organize, on a trial basis, its next three sessions in 1998, 1999 and 2000 in the form of five-week sessions of five working days per week, with one week of two daily meetings and four weeks of only one meeting per day, with a total of 30 meetings per session;

2. Requests the Economic and Social Council to authorize the Sub-Commission to organize its fiftieth, fifty-first and fifty-second sessions in the manner indicated in paragraph 1 above."